

February 23, 2006

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Marlene H. Dortch, Esq.
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: **NOTICE OF *EX PARTE* MEETINGS**

Telecommunications Relay Service and Speech-to-Speech Services for
Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities
CG Docket No. 03-123

Closed Captioning of Video Programming
CG Docket No. 05-231

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On behalf of Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc. ("TDI"), this is to provide notice of two *ex parte* meetings held on February 22, 2006 regarding the above-referenced dockets. Claude L. Stout, Executive Director, TDI, Cheryl Heppner, Vice Chair, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network, and Jeff Rosen, General Counsel, National Council on Disability ("NCD") (collectively the "Consumer Organizations") met with (1) Dana Shaffer from the office of Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate and (2) Ian Dillner from the office of Chairman Kevin J. Martin.

At both meetings the representatives of the Consumer Organizations discussed their *ex parte* letter of February 15, 2006 responding to the January 6, 2006 written *ex parte* presentation submitted by Sorenson Communications, Inc. ("Sorenson"). The representatives stressed the need for Video Relay Service ("VRS") interoperability and the functional equivalency and improved service resulting from interoperable VRS. They noted that Sorenson announced earlier in the week that it planned to discontinue blocking of VRS calls from Sorenson VP-100 devices to competing VRS providers, and the Consumer Organizations thanked the Commission for its assistance in bringing about this result. They also explained that Commission action is still needed on the VRS interoperability matter because another VRS provider is still blocking

outgoing VRS calls to its competitors, and without Commission action there would be nothing stopping other providers from doing the same.

The representatives of the Consumer Organizations also discussed enhanced 9-1-1 service (“E911”), and the need for emergency calling services for all forms of Telecommunications Relay Service (“TRS”), not just TTY and voice carry over (“VCO”). They explained that many people who are deaf or hard of hearing no longer have TTY devices and therefore need access to emergency services through VRS, IP-Relay and two-way paging services. They suggested that the President establish a task force of all E911 stakeholders—representatives of the deaf and hard of hearing communities, the providers of various forms of TRS, the telecommunications companies that manage the E911 network, and the public safety answering points (“PSAPs”)—to work out a solution for the E911 needs of those who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Lastly, the representatives of the Consumer Organizations discussed closed captioning. They went over the impact of closed captioning on access of those who are deaf and hard of hearing to television services and the evolution of closed captioning. They explained that new standards, as advocated by the Consumer Organizations in Docket 05-231, are needed to improve the quality of closed captioning so that people who are deaf and hard of hearing can truly have full access to television.

Very truly yours,

/S/

Paul O. Gagnier
Eliot J. Greenwald

cc: Ian Dillner (by e-mail)
Dana Shaffer (by e-mail)